

the Council on Environmental Quality. The President's chief adviser on the environment was on the phone with the legal counsel at EPA. We did not make this up.

I thought I was proceeding on safe grounds because of the advice I received from the Council on Environmental Quality. I say to my Democratic colleagues: Do you believe in a letter from 21 groups or do you believe in President Clinton's Council on Environmental Quality? The choice is there. Do you believe the advocacy analysis or President Clinton's analysis? I go with President Clinton because I believe there is a track record on protecting the environment.

What about arsenic? It does not shackle anybody. It delays it by 6 months. Under the current law, EPA must give the regs by January 2001. They can issue them at any time up to 2001. EPA retains its authority and its flexibility to issue the regs any time, but it removes the old deadline. Why do we do this? So small rural communities can have time to get EPA information, cost, and other things they are going to need to comply.

Let's go to the ozone. That court case is before the Supreme Court of the United States. It is not going through some small court. It is in the Supreme Court. They are going to decide it in June. The Court term ends in June. This language will no longer apply once the Court issues its ruling. Also, the language becomes moot in 2001.

Why was this language added? To prevent EPA from making new attainment designations and then have the Supreme Court invalidate them. We are saying, let the Court act and move on. At the same time, EPA is allowed to go on with its own planning process. Once the Supreme Court acts, EPA is good to go.

We are not shackling anybody. We are not stymying anybody. I believe in each of these instances there is flexibility to meet the compelling needs of public health. If they did not have that, I would not have supported it. If President Clinton's own team did not tell me it was OK to do this, I would not have done it.

I stand on the advice we were given, and I believe the advice is accurate, responsible, and reliable. I urge my colleagues to defeat the Boxer amendments.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Maryland. I yield 3 minutes to the junior Senator from Idaho.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I thank Senator BOND and Senator MIKULSKI. As chairman of the Fisheries, Wildlife and Drinking Water Subcommittee, I rise today in strong opposition to the amendment to prevent the EPA from having the time necessary to produce a proper arsenic drinking water rule based on the available science. It is important to note that in 1996 this Congress directed the EPA to adopt a spe-

cific schedule to propose an arsenic standard to allow for a full year of public review and comments by scientific experts and then to implement a rule after taking into consideration those comments.

That is what is at stake. It is important to follow up on what Senators BOND and MIKULSKI have said about what this amendment really does. It has been characterized as stopping the EPA from protecting us from arsenic problems.

The reality is that all this amendment does is give the EPA up to an additional 6 months to complete its work. In fact, I am quite surprised to see this amendment today because the administration itself has said they do not have the ability to meet the statutory deadline, and they need this extra time to make sure the rule they adopt is scientifically justified and does not cause the immense damage to local small communities in rural areas that is of concern.

We have held hearings on this issue in our subcommittee, and witness after witness has raised questions about whether the science is there to justify the direction in which the EPA is going. The EPA has acknowledged these questions. The EPA has said it needs time to further review the science, and the EPA has said it will take that time if we give it to them to do a good rule that will protect the country and yet not do damage to small communities in rural areas.

It is also important to note that this amendment does not stop the EPA from acting at any time the EPA deems it is ready to act. If the EPA says it has the process finalized, it has the science understood and is ready to proceed, they can proceed tomorrow, they can proceed in November or December or January when the statutory deadline exists. Again, the EPA has told us they are not ready to do so and that they need this extra time. We believe they need the extra time because of the impending damage that could be caused to local communities across this country.

As Senator BOND has said, there are communities and individual families who will see their water bills go up by hundreds of dollars. There are communities that probably will have to go off their systems because of this. The potential damage if we do not give the EPA the time to act properly and to review the comments is immense, and that is why I must oppose this amendment. I yield back the remainder of my time.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I reserve the time that has been allocated to various Members. I now allocate 3 minutes to the distinguished senior Senator from Idaho.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Idaho is recognized.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—CONFERENCE REPORT TO ACCOMPANY H.R. 4205

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, on behalf of the leadership, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the DOD authorization conference report following the consideration and vote on H.R. 4516 on Thursday; that the conference report be considered as having been read and debated under the following agreement: 2 hours under the control of the chairman of the Armed Services Committee; 2½ hours under the control of Senator LEVIN; 1 hour under the control of Senator GRAMM; 30 minutes under the control of Senator WELLSTONE; that following the debate just outlined, Senator BOB KERREY be recognized to make a point of order, and that the motion to waive the Budget Act be limited to 2 hours equally divided in the usual form. I further ask unanimous consent that following the use or yielding back of time on the motion to waive, the Senate proceed to vote on the motion and, if waived, a vote occur immediately on adoption of the conference report, without any intervening action, motion, or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. REID. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, this is the agreement we have been attempting to work out for the last day. This is something Senator WARNER and Senator LEVIN have worked on very hard. It is a good bill. We, on this side, think the agreement is something that will be to the benefit not only of the Senate but the country.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator from Idaho.

DEPARTMENTS OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT APPROPRIATIONS—Continued

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I thank the chairman of my subcommittee for yielding.

I say to the Senator from California, her amendment is a perfect example of no good deed goes unpunished. I say that to the Senator from California for this very simple reason. This language has been worked out with all of the parties, and all of the staffs, with the administration, and with the EPA. While they do not like it, they understand their science, and where they are does not justify, at this time, the kind of regulation they are attempting to bring down.

From the State of the Senator from California, let me read from the Indian Wells Valley Water District. This is a water district of 10 to 12 wells, wells that, meeting the current standard proposed by EPA, would cost this water district \$1 million per year—a 60- to 70-percent cost increase in their operations.

What happens when Government goes silly or crazy based on science they